

January 2011



Santa Rosa County District 2 Newsletter



A Message From Your Commissioner

District 2
Commissioner
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A lot has happened since our last newsletter- the general election, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years, wow hard to think how quickly time flies by. I hope each of you had a great holiday season, and thank each and everyone that took their part in our election process. In the next four years, I will continue to work hard to maintain and earn your trust.

As your commissioner I have started making connections with our new board member Commissioner Melvin and with our new members of the Florida House, cabinet and Governor's office. Just this past Thursday Kyle Holly and I met briefly with Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam and secured time for another more defined meeting on the possibility of a grant for the Agriplex, to be located in East Milton Park.

I look forward this year to construction of the first phase of this project, the covered equestrian center. Other projects we will see in the near future are some safety improvements on U.S. Hwy. 90 and the completion of the resurfacing of 90 between the two bridges and the addition of a turning lane into Russell Harbor Landing. I also hope that the turning lane to Punjob Road has made driving better for the citizens on that road and for those that want to get to the Grocery Store.

All in all I pray that we will continue to recover from the economic slow down and the damage caused by the oil spill. Please continue with a positive outlook and help someone when you can. Please let me know where I can be of service and again thank you for your trust and support.

Respectfully,

Bob Cole
District 2 Commissioner

U.S. Hwy. 90 Construction Update

Construction on U.S. Hwy. 90, east of Blackwater River Bridge, is well on its way to completion. The project was originally a Florida Department of Transportation project to resurface U.S. Hwy. 90 from Stewart Street to Bayou Drive, just east of the Marquis Bayou Bridge. Commissioner Cole noticed the traffic congestion at the bridge as eastbound motorists, sometimes hauling boats, tried to make a left turn into Russell Harbor Park. Traffic backed up into downtown Milton. Commissioner Cole asked FDOT if they could add turn lanes at the park entrance along with the resurfacing. FDOT looked at the intersection and agreed.

In addition, the park entrance is being relocated further east to move congestion away from the bridge. As an added bonus with the resurfacing project, some sidewalk work is also being done. After the construction, traffic should flow much better east of the Blackwater River Bridge, especially on holidays when access to the park is at its peak. The project is expected to be completed in April.

- Nancy Model, Transportation Planner



Santa Rosa District 2 News

Historic Bagdad Mill Site Park Moves Ahead

The Bagdad Mill Site Park moved a step further with a design workshop on January 15, at the Bagdad Elementary School. At the meeting, preliminary design concepts for the Historic Bagdad Mill Site Park were presented to interested citizens and local support organizations. Prior to the workshop, park designers met with park supporters at the Bagdad Village Museum to research the history of the mill and the community, and to discuss the design concept for the park.

Over 30 people were in attendance to discuss possible funding approaches, proposed design features and architectural styles, potential park furnishings and product details, and ways to minimize construction costs and future maintenance issues. After a lively question and answer period, the attendees moved to three topic stations to discuss architectural theming and design styles, waterfront facilities and product features, and site design features including parking, multi-use trails, and landscape features.

The 21-acre Bagdad Mill Site, located at the union of Pond Creek and Blackwater River in Bagdad, was previously the location of the Bagdad Land and Lumber Company Saw Mill which operated from 1835 to 1939. More recently, the property was used to manufacture pre-stressed concrete products and asphalt paving material. The site was acquired by the State of Florida Board of Trustees in 2000 and was leased to Santa Rosa County for development in 2004 as a passive recreation area. The park is expected to be built in phases over several years based on funding availability, with construction of the first phase targeted for 2012.

A future workshop detailing more specific design and construction details is tentatively scheduled for early March. Invitations will be mailed and posted on the county website. Please visit the Park's website at www.santarosa.fl.gov/parks/bagdadmillsite.html to learn more or to submit comments regarding this project.

- **Sheila Harris, Special Projects/Grants**

Russell Harber Landing

The City of Milton has been developing the area on the eastern bank of the Blackwater River known as Russell Harber Landing for the past several years. In the first phase, known as Russell Harber South, they have developed roads, parking, a boat ramp and floating dock, picnic shelters and lighting. In the second phase, known as Russell Harber North, they have constructed a large pavilion, picnic shelters and sidewalks and thanks to Santa Rosa County the road was paved making access easier. They now are working to continue to improve Russell Harber Landing to provide an even better experience for all of our visitors. We have now formed a partnership between the City of Milton, Santa Rosa County and the Northwest Florida Water Management District to bring utilities to Russell Harber North and add a new hiking and biking trail along old River Road as well as raised docks where people could launch canoes and kayaks or fish in the bayou. Our next major step in the development of the park is to install water, sewer and electricity utilities.

There has been a considerable increase of the use of this park since the completion of the current improvements and we believe the addition of utilities, as well as the addition of hiking, biking, canoeing and fishing will allow us to expand the uses of the park and better serve even more visitors. The city will own, manage and maintain the facilities and provide the manpower to do as much of the work as possible. We believe this is what will take Russell Harber Landing to the next level. Our goal is to provide the best possible experience for the citizens of the City of Milton and Santa Rosa County. We would like to start with providing electrical service to this area and we would like to thank Commissioner Cole for helping in reaching this goal. His commitment of county resources designated for park improvements will allow for the installation of electrical service and lighting in the newly expanded area of Russell Harber Landing North.

- **Brian Watkins, City Manager
City of Milton**

New Sidewalks

The Santa Rosa County Public Works Department recently completed the Old Bagdad Highway sidewalk project. This Bagdad community enhancement project is being funded through the generosity of the county's Tourist Development Council and consists of approximately 900 feet of ADA compliant sidewalk and street crossings.

The sidewalk extends along the north side of Old Bagdad Highway from Forsyth Street to just west of School Street. This is the first phase of a plan to extend pedestrian friendly access into and through the Old Mill Site park property.





Santa Rosa District 2 News

Business is Growing at Industrial Parks

In this edition of Commissioner Cole's newsletter, we'd like to review the most current growth and progress in the Santa Rosa Industrial Park. Industry in Santa Rosa County, particularly in our industrial parks, is growing and job creation has steadily increased over the years.

Just a very quick eight years ago, new industries and new jobs were sprouting all over the Santa Rosa Industrial Park. Things were good then, and they've only gotten better over time. In 2002, there were about 1,100 jobs between the western edges of the industrial park through to the GEO property. This 1,100 number does not include employees at the county jail or the ones at Gulf Power. Today, we are looking at 2,200 jobs in that same area, again not counting those jobs brought to us by our friends at the county jail and Gulf Power. This growth is exciting! We've seen new industries locate to the park, like those in the logistics, IT and construction services fields. H.T. Hackney's recent arrival, the Bay Area Food Bank, Clearwire, Boise and Pro-Build are just a few of the thriving industries right here in our backyard.

As a matter of fact, the Santa Rosa Industrial Park is quickly reaching capacity, a wonderful problem for us to contend with. However, new projects like the additional 160-acre tract of industrial-zoned property in the SRIP, creation of the new Northwest Florida Industrial Park at I-10 and the Whiting Aviation Park are adding to our product inventory and keeping us competitive with a long list of other sought after properties in the U.S. in which industries are looking to locate and bring jobs. These projects also make us strong partners with the economic development efforts being pursued by our neighboring Escambia County.

The bottom line is that industry is strong in Santa Rosa County. Our robust product offering and successful workforce development efforts make our area attractive to new businesses. We are heading in the right direction and many good things are coming down the pike in the future. Together with our strong community support and our economic development staff at TEAM Santa Rosa, your Santa Rosa County Commission is creating a rich environment for industry. We know this because industry is voting with their confidence in us. They are coming here and staying here. They are thriving here and making Santa Rosa County an even better place to live and work.

-TEAM Santa Rosa



2009/2010 Fiscal Year Annual Report Available Online

SANTA ROSA COUNTY



Naturally



Board of County Commissioners Annual Report to the Citizens of Santa Rosa County
Fiscal Year 2009/2010

The Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioner's Annual Report to the Citizens for the 2009/2010 fiscal year is now available on the county's website at www.santarosa.fl.gov, under what's hot or click here to view. The report titled "Santa Rosa County, Naturally" highlights each department's accomplishments and achievements and contains financial summaries and statistics for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2009 and ending September 30, 2010. This year's report also features the natural beauty of Santa Rosa County through personal photos taken by county staff.

In order to offer this information at the lowest cost possible, the annual report was written and designed in-house and is not professionally printed, but is available on the county's Website at www.santarosa.fl.gov. Citizens without internet access are encouraged to use the public computer resources available at one of the five county libraries or may call (850) 983-1877 to receive a copy by mail.

S.R. 1 Historic Restoration



Historic State Road 1 is an existing brick roadway parallel to U.S. Hwy. 90 that is presently utilized by many residents of the area for walking and biking. The roadway was originally constructed in 1921 and was only around nine feet wide, but as cars became larger, four feet wide concrete "shoulders" were added to each side of the brick to serve the growing vehicle population of the time. At the time of construction, a skim coat of concrete covered the bricks. Over time, this coat has worn off in most locations.

In 2003, the Blackwater Heritage Trail, Inc. applied for funding through the Transportation Enhancement Program seeking funds to restore historic Florida State Road 1 through East Milton. Funding to design the project was obtained from Florida Department of Transportation in March of 2007. Design was completed in May of 2010 by the county engineering department in accordance with the standards of the Federal Highway

Administration, State Historic Preservation Office, and U.S. Department of the Interior. The project was advertised for bids in September with bids opened on October 19. The low bid was well over the funds available through FDOT to construct the entire project. Since the time of the bid opening, the county engineering department has been working with FDOT to secure additional enhancement funding to complete the entire project. It appears those funds have been secured and should be available in February of 2011. Construction is expected to begin in early spring 2011 with Roads, Inc of NW Florida selected by low bid as the prime contractor. The project should take 270 days with completion in late 2011.

The scope of this project will include patching potholes, buckled areas, and areas with no bricks with existing, period correct bricks and modern pavers as needed. Also included will be signage and railing to enhance safety along the bike trail. This restoration will tie into two FDOT proposed projects to add pedestrian ways to U.S. Hwy. 90 from the Blackwater River Bridge to the existing CSX overpass in East Milton. The bike route created by this project will begin at the intersection of U.S. Hwy. 90 and Milton Trail, and join the brick road known as Old Spanish Trail eastward to Cathy Street. The route will cross the railroad track on Cathy Street and continue westward on Red Brick road, then join the existing brick road as it parallels modern U.S. Hwy. 90 for approximately five miles to the end of the bricks. From there, an asphalt trail will be constructed to connect with the existing unimproved trail network through the Blackwater State Forest.

In keeping with the historical context of this trail, the construction techniques utilized will be very labor intensive and time consuming as to preserve the character and integrity of the intact sections of the roadway. Each area of the brick roadway that requires patching from either the absence of brick, the brick being buckled and pulverized, or the introduction of concrete or asphalt patches over the last 90 years has been identified on the plans for repair. Most of these areas are quite small in nature and will require hand work to complete the repair. There are several areas that are in such disrepair that the only alternative is to remove the entire brick section and start over. The contractor has been instructed to save all the whole, re-usable period correct brick, clean them, and use them to complete the patch. By utilizing this method, we use as many of the period correct brick as possible and lessen the need to use so many modern pavers. Brick Road to Boom Town, The Story of Santa Rosa County's "Old Brick Road" by Brian R. Rucker, is available at the library, as a very good source for further information on the history of the road and bridge across the Blackwater.



-Chris Phillips, Project Engineer